

March 21, 2010



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Dear Friend,

The American people won a small victory yesterday when the powerful House Rules Committee decided to abandon its Slaughter rule – the “deem as passed” clause which would allow Members of Congress to avoid an up or down vote on the Senate health care bill. Now there will be some modicum of transparency on how elected officials vote on the Senate health care. The public can now hold Members accountable for their votes, which is the very essence of our Republic.

However, transparency and accountability are not the only foundations of democracy. Full and vibrant debate on the merits of policy is also crucial to our system of government. Unfortunately, the Minority is still being shut out of the debate. The rule which defines how debate will proceed before the vote, states that “the Chair may decline to entertain” the motions and questions routinely offered by Members on both sides of the aisle for purposes of debate and clarification. That means that the Chair may also entertain those same motions if made by a Member of the Majority party. So the Majority is giving itself the ability to use all of the procedural options available under the rules, while at the same time denying those same tools to the Minority.

As I continue to learn more about the House “reconciliation” bill that amends the Senate bill, I am growing more concerned about its details. At a time when we are facing enormous unemployment problems, the Majority Party Leaders have added a jobs killer provision that will affect many small business owners. This new 3.8 percent so-called “Medicare tax” will create serious disincentives for investment and savings just when we need more of both to reignite job growth. The tax will be attached to all investment income as well as all income over \$200,000 (or married couples jointly earning over \$250,000). Small businesses account for 60 to 80 percent of new job growth in this country. With unemployment in some areas of my congressional district approaching 20 percent, we cannot afford to penalize those who are providing jobs for the American people. Taxing the very entities that are

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providing jobs for the American people is destructive to our economic recovery.

Ironically, the Majority Party has just renamed the tax provision as an "Unearned Income Medicare Contribution." What a linguistic sleight of hand. A "contribution," in ordinary parlance, implies a voluntary donation. The IRS is not likely to look at this tax as optional.

This job killing tax is just one more reason why the American public is right – Congress needs to take another look at health care reform legislation and move forward on those elements that are beneficial for this nation, both in the short and long term. The American people deserve no less. What they do not deserve is yet another blow to job creation.

It is my intention to remain on the House Floor today in order to listen and – to the extent possible – engage in meaningful debate on the provisions both of the Senate bill as well as the House reconciliation package. My offices in Washington, D.C. (202.225.5716) and Gold River, CA (916.859.9906) remain open to keep our line of communication open between my congressional office and you. I will keep you updated as the situation develops here in Washington.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Lungren
Member of Congress

Any comments?

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